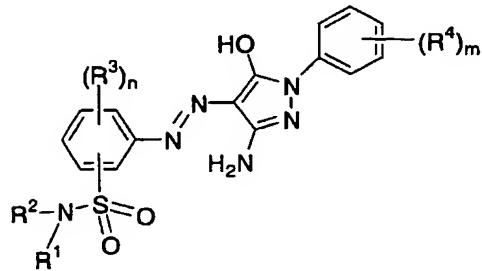


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An azo compound represented by the following Formula (I):

Formula (I)



wherein: R¹ and R² respectively independently represent a hydrogen atom, an alkyl group having 1 to 21 carbon atoms, an alkenyl group having 2 to 21 carbon atoms, an aryl group having 6 to 21 carbon atoms or an aralkyl group having 7 to 21 carbon atoms, where R¹ and R² may form a hetero ring in combination with a nitrogen atom combined therewith; R³ represents a halogen atom, a trihalomethyl group, an alkoxy group having 1 to 21 carbon atoms, a nitro group or an amino group; R⁴ represents a halogen atom or a -SO₃M group, where M represents a cation of a metal atom or a cation made of a nitrogen-containing compound; m denotes an integer from 0 to 5; and n denotes an integer from 0 to 4.

2. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein R¹ or R² in Formula (I) respectively represents an alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

3. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein R¹ or R² in Formula (I) respectively represents an aryl group having 6 to 10 carbon atoms.

4. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein R¹ or R² in Formula (I) respectively represents an aralkyl group having 7 to 10 carbon atoms.

5. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein the sum of the formula weights of R¹ and R² in the Formula (I) is 500 or less.

6. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein R^3 in Formula (I) represents a chlorine atom, a trifluoromethyl group, an alkoxy group having 1 to 7 carbon atoms, a nitro group, a substituted amino group or an unsubstituted amino group.

7. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein n in Formula (I) denotes an integer from 0 to 1.

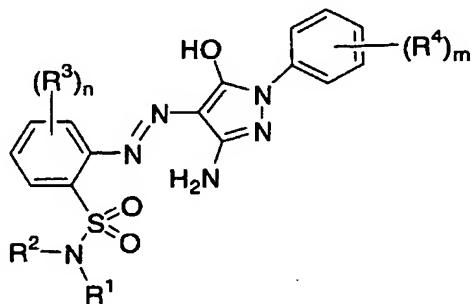
8. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein R^4 in Formula (I) represent a chlorine atom or a $-SO_3M$ group.

9. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein M in Formula (I) represents a cation of Na, K, Mg, Ca, Ba, Zn, Al, Cu or Fe or a cation comprising a nitrogen-containing compound.

10. The azo compound of claim 1, wherein m in Formula (I) denotes an integer from 0 to 3.

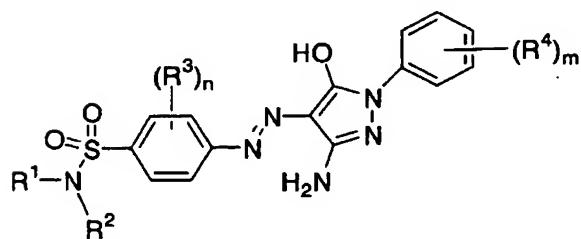
11. The azo compound of 1, wherein the azo compound represented by Formula (I) has a structure represented by the following Formulae (II), (III) or (IV):

Formula (II)



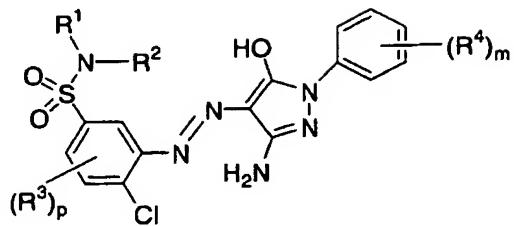
[0045]

Formula (III)



[0046]

Formula (IV)



wherein: the scopes of R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and m are the same as R¹, R², R³, R⁴ and m in Formula (I) respectively; the scopes of n in Formulae (II) and (III) are the same as n in the Formula (I); and p in Formula (IV) denotes an integer from 0 to 3.